



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



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**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE**

February 27, 2015

Senator Fonfara, Representative Carpino, Senator Kissel, Representative Mushinsky and members of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. I am Morna A. Murray, J.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding **H.B. No. 6738 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE FEDERAL ACHIEVING A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE ACT.**

In my previous work as Senior Counsel to Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA), I had the pleasure of working on this important legislation and was thrilled to learn of its passage at the federal level. Enactment of this bill's provisions would help countless families to save for disability related expenses without having to worry about negative consequences to their loved one's vital state and federal benefits through the establishment of a tax-exempt savings account.

Families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities should have as many tools available to them as possible to assure appropriate future planning can occur and that loved ones can be cared for while maintaining crucial choice and control over necessary services and supports.

I commend Connecticut and the Program Review and Investigations Committee for pursuing legislation that would help many of the families who receive supports from DDS. And, while I understand that several state agencies need to be involved in assuring that any Connecticut ABLE Act proposal meets federal requirements and does not create any unintended impact when carried out at the state level, I applaud your committee for moving this bill forward and working to create a much needed option for individuals and families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this important legislation. You may contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 if you have any questions.